

Attendance Policy

HHS Attendance / Late Arrival / Early Dismissal Procedures

STUDENT ABSENCES

When a student is absent, the parent/guardian may report the absence to the school by e-mailing HHSAttendance@hcpss.org. The message should include the student's first and last name, grade, date of absence and reason for the absence.

Upon returning to school after an absence, the student must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian citing the date(s) of the absence and an explanation why the student could not attend school. The student must take the note to his/her first period teacher. Upon receipt of the note, the attendance record in Synergy will be updated to reflect the excused absence.

Please note, many teachers post assignments online (Canvas) so students can often view and access class work or homework even when they are not on campus.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If a student needs to leave school early, the student must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian citing:

1. the first and last name of the student
2. the DATE AND TIME of the early dismissal
3. an explanation why the student will be dismissed early
4. the name of the person who will be coming to pick up the student (or if the student will drive him or herself) and
5. a parent/guardian contact phone number

*A note is required even if a student will return to school (i.e. a doctor's appointment during the school day).

The note should be delivered to the Attendance Secretary, Mrs. Mastrogianis, in the Attendance Office before the start of first period. A pass will be written for the student's dismissal and the student can pick up their pass in the Attendance Office any time after first period (during breaks between classes or during lunch depending on their scheduled dismissal time).

The student will show their pass to their teacher at the time of dismissal and the student will be allowed to leave class at that time. Students must sign out with the Attendance Secretary prior to leaving the building. They can wait in front of the school, in the main lobby or the Front Office or leave if they are driving themselves. If the student brought a note into the Attendance Office, there is no need for a parent/guardian to come into the school to sign out the student.

If the student is returning to school, the student should check in at the Attendance Office upon their return to sign in their return time. The student will need the pass that they received before they left school – it will be signed with the return time. This pass is required to regain entry into the classroom. If the student does not check in at the Attendance Office, they will remain absent in Synergy for the duration of the school day. A parent/guardian does NOT have to come in to the Attendance Office when the student returns to school.

If the student does not have a note from a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must come in to the Attendance Office with photo identification and sign out the student. The student will then be called down from their class at that time.

*Please do not call or text the student as that could result in the phone being confiscated and a detention.

LATE ARRIVAL

If a student arrives to school late (arriving in their first period class after 7:25am), the student must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian citing:

1. the first and last name of the student
2. the date of the late arrival
3. an explanation why the student was late

If a student arrives to school late and does not have a note and a parent/guardian does not come in, the student's late arrival will be marked unexcused (and missed work will not be able to be turned in), even if the reason for the late arrival is valid.

Continual unexcused late arrivals result in consequences including, but not limited to: phone calls to the parent, morning detention(s), lunch detention(s) and Friday/Saturday school assignment(s).

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

The Howard County Public School System grants students a maximum of three (3) excused absences (discretionary days) per school year when the absence is pre-arranged with the principal and teachers.

Reasons for such absences include: college visits or family commitments that cannot be scheduled on a non-school day. **Such days may not occur during exam periods.**

If a student knows in advance that they will miss school, there is an approval process for pre-arranged absences. This procedure informs the teachers of the students' absence in advance and allows the student to get their work ahead of time.

If a student needs to have a pre-arranged absence approved, the student may request an Extended Absence/Discretionary Absence form from Mrs. Mastrogianis or you may download the form from HCPSS.org. Here is the link to the form: http://www.hcpss.org/f/aboutus/absence_request.pdf If a parent signed note will be submitted in lieu of the Extended Absence/Discretionary Absence form the note must contain the following:

1. the first and last name of the student
2. the date(s) of the absence and
3. an explanation of why the student will miss school

This note should be turned in to Mrs. Mastrogianis in the Attendance Office at least four days before the student will be absent. Mrs. Mastrogianis and the Principal, Mr. Novak, will review the request. The student will be called to the Attendance Office once the request has been reviewed and a pre-arranged absence form has been filled out by Mrs. Mastrogianis. The student should take the form to all of their teachers for their signature to acknowledge receipt of the information. Once the form has been signed by all of the teachers, the form should be returned to Mrs. Mastrogianis in the Attendance Office.

If this process is followed and the completed pre-arranged absence form is submitted to Mrs. Mastrogianis in the Attendance Office in advance of the absence, the student is not required to have a note for their absence upon their return to school.

Please note, many teachers post assignments online (Canvas) so students can often view and access class work or homework even when they are not on campus. The Pre-Approved Absence procedure (see policy description for details) allows the student to get their work ahead of time and/or to make the necessary arrangements with their teachers in advance of their absence (to include determining due dates). In accordance with Policy 9010, Attendance, students returning from lawful (excused) absences have an equal number of days to complete make-up work.

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION: REQUEST FOR ABSENCE

The Board of Education recognizes the diversity of religious traditions represented among the staff and students of the Howard County Public School System and the value such diversity adds to the educational program. The Board respects the religious practices of staff and students and is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for religious obligations under Policy 3000, Religious Observances.

Parents must complete the Absence for Religious Obligation form if their child is planning to miss school in order to participate in a religious observance. Here is the link to the form:

http://www.hcpss.org/aboutus/form_religiousabsence.pdf

The form should be turned in to Mrs. Mastrogianis in the Attendance Office and she will forward the request to the Equity Assurance Office for disposition. If the student's absence is approved, the absence will be considered a lawful absence either for the day or any portion of the day. That request should be received by the school before the date of the religious obligation. A student may make up work and receive a recorded grade when an absence for religious observance is approved. This includes opportunities to make up any missed tests or assignments.

If a note from the parent explaining the absence is not received by the school within two school days of the student's return, the absence may be coded as unlawful (unexcused). If the religious obligation requires a student to leave prior to the end of the school day, the student must sign out according to the school's early dismissal procedures.